

Item 14: Communication to Commissioner Hadden re Line Clearance

From: Vice, Jeffrey (Jeff)

Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2020 4:00 PM

To: Hadden, Karen - BC <bc-Karen.Hadden@austintexas.gov>

Cc: 'Hopkins, Marty' <martyhopkins@eversheds-sutherland.com>; Hopkins, Marty - BC <BC-Marty.Hopkins@austintexas.gov>; 'Karen Hadden' <karendhadden@gmail.com>

Subject: EUC Follow-up

Commissioner Hadden,

At the EUC's last meeting, during the Future Agenda Items discussion, you requested 1) some additional information/responses to questions re line clearance and herbicidal use; and 2) an update regarding electrification of the heavy-duty vehicles in the Austin Energy fleet (e.g., bucket trucks). Chair Hopkins and I reviewed the agenda for September, noting that it contained a briefing you had previously requested (from Office of Sustainability), as well as a long-delayed update on the SHINES project (requested by Commissioner Tuttle)...plus the 3rd Quarter Financial Report postponed from last meeting.

Recognizing that this month we wouldn't be able to take up your two concerns above, we wanted to 1) provide you with information that I hope will satisfy your request for additional information re line clearance...and 2) explain that we will schedule a fleet electrification update in the months to come (the last update was provided to EUC Nov 2019).

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Best,
Jeff

Herbicide Use in Line Clearance Activities

- a) Treatment or removal of dead vines information is located on the Austin Energy Website Tree Pruning (<https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/residential-services/tree-pruning/tree-pruning>) FAQs section (<https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/residential-services/tree-pruning/faqs>) regarding vines on utility poles (snap shot attached). In light of your concerns, we intend to change the verbiage from "treat" to "apply an EPA-approved herbicide to the base of the vine." To clarify, AE/AE's contractors will remove only vines from poles and not the remaining dead vines that may stretch out along a fence or into surrounding flora.
- b) You thought perhaps there was a prohibition of pesticide use at the City of Austin; we could not locate any such policy banning pesticide or herbicide use. Rather, the City maintains an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan (<http://www.austintexas.gov/ipm>) which is included in Austin Energy's forestry contract solicitations (language excerpt provided below).

NOTE:

The Contractor shall be responsible for all record keeping regarding pesticide application as required by the TDA Rules and Regulations and the City's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan. The Contractor shall abide by the City's IPM plan when using any general use chemicals, including fertilizer, herbicide or other chemicals, and shall obtain written approval from Austin Energy's Project Manager prior to any application. Application of chemicals shall be made only by individuals licensed by the TDA. If pesticide application is required and approved by Austin Energy, the Contractor shall maintain all Pesticide Application Records (the Records) as required by the terms of their License as outlined by the Laws and Regulations of the TDA. If Austin Energy requests the Records, the Contractor shall provide them within five calendar days. The Contractor shall maintain the Records for two years as required by the Laws and Regulations of the TDA.

The City of Austin's IPM plan website is at: <http://www.austintexas.gov/ipm>.

- c) You had specific concerns re 1311 Alta Vista. For example, you asked about the notification process – please find a copy of the Vegetation Work Plan (VWP) below. You mentioned dead flowers at the site – please find below a short explanation of the treatment location and explanation of the physical presence of the site provided by Wright Tree Service. Wright Tree Service provided us with pictures of the site taken during a site visit we requested on Aug 10/the day of the EUC meeting, and I've included those below as well.

V.W.P. Id: 2005-A79ZT-501



Tickets 2020
Wright

Distribution
Tickets
(Blanket)

Vegetation Work Plan

The Austin Energy Utility Forestry Section is currently pruning and/or removing vegetation that is near the electric facilities. This work is necessary to ensure safe and reliable electric service to your area and is not at any additional expense to you.

I, PATTERSON, ROBERT, have been notified by a representative of Austin Energy of the following work on my property at

Address 1311 ALTA VISTA AVE
AUSTIN, 78704

Phone # 361-288-0133
Phone #

- No Work Required
- Limb by Limb
- Refusal
- Non Contact
- Stump Treatment

Pole # 238406 to Pole # 238406

- Dogs in Yard
- Locked Gate
- Call Ahead
- Mitigation Trees
- Shared Trees

Notes
HOTSPOTTED FOR VINES / ACCESS THROUGH ALLEY AT 905 AVONDALE

Total Trees Pruned	Total Trees Removed by Diameter at Breast Height				Brush
0	2-7.9" diam: 0	8-12.9" diam: 0	13-18.9" diam: 0	19 and greater" diam: 0	1

Ribbon Number	Action	Loc	Species	Exact Tree Size (in. DBH)	ROW	Type	Comments	Action Detail
1	Remove	R	Vines			Fast	REMOVE VINES FROM POLE AND SERVICE WIRES	Remove from around the pole

**Austin Energy has developed an interim line clearance Standard that will be in place until a tree regrowth rate study has been completed, reviewed, and new pruning clearances have been established. At that time, your trees will be reviewed and additional clearances may be required.

Contractor	Crew Type	Crew Foreman	Start Date	Comp Date	Assess Date	Work Order
Wright Tree Service, Inc.	H/C	Sciriano	6-8-20	6-8-20	05-06-2020	18814

AE Representative	
Name	KYMBERLI HERRON
Phone #	512-696-1072

Bob Patterson - verbal
Property Owner or Legal Rep

5/13/20
Date Signed

Subject: RE: 1311 Alta Vista

Treatment would have only been around the 2 poles. 1 pole along the side of the back yard and 1 pole along the alley. There are some dead vines along the fence by both poles. We wouldn't have sprayed the entire perimeter. Only at the poles where vines were cut.

Correct, there are some dead vines in the small hackberries. It appears customer raised canopy of these small trees and cut vines growing up the trunk of each small tree. The trees are alive; dead leaves are vines.

*** External email - Exercise caution ***

Here are some photos from 1311 Alta Vista. Vines cut on poles, but that's the only work that was done here by WTS.





It looks like customer or tenant did some recent pruning to some of the small trees in the back yard (not pruned by WTS). The ground is pretty bare here by the poles. I don't see any dead plants other than vines that were cut. Herbicide was likely applied to the cut vines, or else they would be most likely be growing back by now.



Some dead vines in small trees recently pruned by either customer or tenant?

Jeff Vice

Director, Local Government Issues

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